

For Immediate Release

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June 3, 2011

201-222-2828

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Legislation saves lives, reduces property loss and public disaster aid

WASHINGTON, D.C. – On June 2, 2011, Representatives Albio Sires (D-NJ), Mario Diaz-Balart (R-FL), and Richard Hanna (R-NY) introduced legislation to make buildings safer and increase public safety. Strong building codes will help strengthen emergency preparedness against natural disasters.

The *Safe Building Codes Incentives Act, H.R. 2069* creates a financial incentive for states to adopt and enforce statewide building codes that would protect communities in the event of hurricanes, tornadoes, earthquakes, fire, and other natural disasters. States that enact comprehensive building codes will qualify for an additional four percent of funding for disaster relief. Additionally, this legislation will enable states to utilize existing pre-disaster mitigation grants to establish and administer building code programs prior to the occurrence of a disaster.

“Strong building codes are critical to protecting the safety and vitality of our communities in the event of a natural disaster. I am proud to sponsor this important bill to encourage states to

adopt model building codes that will save lives, reduce property loss, and better construct our homes and buildings for natural catastrophes,” said Representative Sires.

“In the past few weeks and months multiple cities around the country have been victims of natural disasters destroying numerous homes, lives, and businesses. While these events have been devastating, they confirm the importance of investing in strong homes and buildings,” said Representative Diaz-Balart. “My goal is to keep our families and communities safe while saving taxpayers money, which is precisely what this legislation focuses on.”

Stronger, more modern building codes will make homes and buildings more likely to withstand higher impacts, helping them to remain intact in the event of a disaster. The proactive action taken by this legislation aims to reduce the amount of taxpayer dollars spent on future recovery efforts.

Research has shown that having nationally-recognized standards for building codes can provide a tremendous level of protection. The Louisiana State University Hurricane Center has estimated that of the \$10 billion in damage to homes in Louisiana, modern building codes would have spared 80 percent of the damage.

The Safe Building Codes Act has been endorsed by a large coalition of groups, companies and organizations, including: Allstate Insurance Company, American Insurance Association (AIA), Farmers Insurance Group of Companies, Federal Alliance for Safe Homes (FLASH), Financial Services Roundtable (FSR), Institute for Business and Home Safety (IBHS), Independent Insurance Agents and Brokers of America (IIABA), International Code Council, Liberty Mutual Insurance, MetLife, National Association of Mutual Insurance Companies (NAMIC), National Fire Protection Association, Nationwide Insurance, NeighborWorks America, Property and Casualty Insurers Association of America (PCIAA), St. Paul Travelers, Simpson Strong-Tie Co., Solutia, State Farm Insurance Companies, The Hartford and USAA Insurance.

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